

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for performing continuous extrusion of a metallic material, comprising such as copper, so that the material to be extruded ~~[[(1)]]~~ is fed feeding a metallic material into the extrusion member ~~[[(4)]]~~ by means of a feed member ~~(3)~~ provided with a groove located on ~~[[its]]~~ a peripheral wall of a feed member ~~(2)~~ and, wherein the groove has ~~[[by]]~~ an abutment ~~[[(5)]]~~ arranged in said groove, ~~and the groove (8)~~ is protected protecting the groove against oxidation by a gas-protecting member ~~arranging for~~ at least part of the peripheral wall ~~[[(2)]]~~ of the feed member ~~(3)~~ a gas-protecting member (7), ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein pressure in ~~[[the]]~~ a space ~~[[(9)]]~~ left between the gas-protecting member and the feed member is higher than the pressure in the surrounding atmosphere, and moving the metallic material along the groove into an extrusion member.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas-protecting member ~~[[(7)]]~~ is arranged at least in ~~[[that]]~~ a part of the peripheral wall ~~[[(2)]]~~ that does not contain material to be extruded.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1 ~~[[or 2]]~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas-protecting member ~~[[(7)]]~~ covers at least part of the surface of the peripheral wall ~~[[(2)]]~~ of the feed member in the direction of the width thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas-protecting member covers at least the groove ~~[[(8)]]~~.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that comprising feeding non-oxidizing gas through

~~the gas-protecting member into the space [(9)] left between the gas-protecting member and the feed member, there is fed non-oxidizing gas by means of the gas-protecting member (7).~~

6. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 5,
~~characterized in that~~ feeding hydrogen into the space [(9)] left between the gas-protecting
~~member and the feed member, there is fed hydrogen.~~

7. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 5,
~~characterized in that~~ comprising feeding hydrogen and nitrogen into the space [(9)] left
~~between the gas-protecting member and the feed member, there is fed hydrogen and nitrogen.~~

8. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 5, 6 or 7
~~characterized in that~~ comprising preheating the non-oxidizing gas is advantageously
~~preheated up to 400 – 800 degrees.~~

9. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 5, 6, 7 or
~~8, characterized in that~~ removing oxygen is removed from the non-oxidizing gas by filtering
filtration before feeding the gas into the space [(9)] left between the gas-protecting member
~~and the feed member.~~

10. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to any of the
~~preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that protecting the whole extrusion process is
~~surrounded by method with an inert gas protection (6).~~

11. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to any of the
~~preceding claims~~ claim 10, characterized in that wherein the pressure in the space [(9)] left
~~between the gas-protecting member and the feed member is higher than the pressure in the~~
~~inert gas protection (6).~~

12. (Currently Amended) Equipment for performing continuous extrusion
~~of a metallic material, such as copper, comprising where the material to be extruded (1) is fed~~
~~in the extrusion member (4) by means of a feed member [(3)] provided with a groove~~

located on ~~[[its]]~~ a peripheral wall of a feed member; ~~(2) and by an abutment~~ ~~[[5]]~~ arranged in said groove, ~~and the groove is protected against oxidation by arranging; and~~ for at least part of the peripheral wall ~~[[2]]~~ of the feed member ~~[[3]]~~, a gas-protecting member ~~[[7]]~~, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein pressure in ~~[[the]]~~ a space ~~[[9]]~~ left between the gas-protecting member and the feed member is ~~arranged to be~~ higher than the pressure in the surrounding atmosphere.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The equipment according to claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas-protecting member ~~[[7]]~~ comprises at least one protecting member ~~[[10]]~~ provided with at least one gas channel ~~[[11]]~~ for feeding gas into the space ~~[[9]]~~ left between the gas-protecting member and the feed member.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The equipment according to claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas-protecting member ~~[[7]]~~ comprises an inner protecting member ~~[[10]]~~ and at least one outer protecting member ~~[[14]]~~.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The equipment according to claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gas fed ~~[[in]]~~ through the inner protecting member ~~[[10]]~~ has a higher pressure than the gas fed in through the outer protecting member ~~[[14]]~~.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The equipment according to ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ comprising at least one lining element on both sides of the groove, on the peripheral wall of the feed member, ~~there is arranged at least one lining element~~ ~~(13)~~ in order to seal ~~[[the]]~~ a gap ~~[[17]]~~ left between the gas-protecting member and the feed member.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The equipment according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lining element is made of the same material as the metallic material to be extruded.

18. (New) The equipment according to claim 12, wherein the metallic material is copper.

19. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the metallic material is copper.